TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

I *Have Expoſed to your view Two Lecture Sermons with ſome Enlargement; not with a deſire to be in publick view my ſelf, eſpecially in my declining years, were it not the Call of God I am under to it; much leſs that any thing of mine ſhould be ſo: but it was deſired by ſome that were affected themſelves, and found others to be ſo: And in Hopes it might be of ſome uſe in this Apoſtatizing Time in* New England, *to Recover Backſliding Children to their God from their total forſaking the Hope of their Fathers, and others from a forſaking their Firſt Love, that they might do their firſt works: God may confirm his Love to this people, and continue under their Church-ſtate; I have caſt in my mite to it,*

God

C 1103.16.5

To the READER.

God delights in Exalting his own wisdom and power in this work, and therefore makes use of such as may not Eclipse but brighten this Glory. What is weak in it, reckon it to the Instrument, not with too severe Censure, but with pitty, and further your Prayer for him; what is of use and benefit, let God have all the Glory. All I desire is to be counted faithful by him that put me into the Ministry, and that I may give up my account with Joy in my watchfulness over any Souls.

Your Souls Friend,

James Allen.

Man

Mans Self-Reflection,

Is the Special Means to further his RECOVERY from his

APOSTASY

FROM

GOD.

PSALM 119. 59.

I thought on my Wayes, and turned my Feet unto thy Teſtimonies.

THE Pſalms if the Scriptures be Compared to a Body, may well be called the heart of it; in other parts of it God mainly ſpeaks to man: In this there is the gracious mans pouring out his Soul

Soul to God, and manifeſts his holy affection to others, eſpecially in this Pſalm. It is parted into Twenty Two Paragraphs, each begin with an Hebrew Letter Alphabeticaly, the firſt with *Aleph*, and ſo on; ſo that we have it thus repeated eight times in the whole, and may well be called the true Chriſtians Inſtructor, in which God Teacheth him not only by his Word, but the Examples of Saints the true practiſe of Godlineſs. By his Precepts he tells us, what we ought to do, and the way we ſhould walk in to Salvation, by Recorded Examples what Saints did that were in this way of Salvation, which we are to Enquire after for our Imitation. *Jer.* 6. 16. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Stand ye in the wayes, and ſee and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your Souls.* This Example before us is thought to be *Davids*, who probably was the Pen man of the Pſalm. In this Paragraph which is the Eighth in order, & begins & ends with the Letter *Cheth*. The Pſalmiſt begins with aſſerting his right in God as his *Portion*, *verſe* 57. which he proves.

Firſt. By his Eſteem of his Word, and Subjection to his Soveraignty.

Secondly. By the high Eſteem of his Favour, which he proves by his Reverend Sincere and Earneſt Supplication for it as an effect of his faith in his promiſe, *verſe* 58.

Thirdly

Thirdly. It is further proved by his Conſideration and Thoughtfulneſs of his ways to further his Repentance and Return to God after *ſtraying from him, verſe* 59.

This is both a proof of his Intereſt in God, and direction to the Cure of a Profeſſing Peoples Apoſtaſy from God, where it is total or partial; and of uſe therefore to Saints and Sinners, to further their true Repentance and Reformation. So I ſhall now Improve it.

In the words.

1. The means he uſed, *I thought on my ways*, or, Conſideration of his ways.

2. The ſucceſs of it: *I turned my feet unto thy Teſtimonies.* Firſt, The means uſed, where

Firſt, The Perſon that did uſe it, I *David*, a King, a Prophet, a Saint, a man after Gods Heart. So that it concerns Rich and Poor, High and Low, Good and Bad; as all need Repentance, ſo ſhould uſe this means.

Secondly. The act, *I thought.*

Thirdly. The Object, *My wayes.* The word in Hebrew uſed as Criticks tell us, it ſignifies a curious viewing of a thing on every ſide, & round about it; or exact Conſideration of a curious work; if one thing were amiſs or not: So he did his ways, that is, his actions or way of his heart, the inward movings of his will & affections in its deſire & reſolutions. And his External Walk & Converſation, whether according to Gods Rule of them or not.

2.

2. The ſucceſs of it, *I turned my feet to t. Teſtimonies.* I will or ſhall turn: It was a Reſolution ſtirred up in him, which he acknowledgeth to God as giving ſucceſs to this means, and his Encouraging Promiſe, he depended on his faithfulneſs in it, to turn the affections of his Soul; and his External Converſation to Gods Teſtimonies, the right way and rule of all his Actions; in which is deſcribed his true Repentance and Reformation after wandring from Duty; or the Cure of his Apoſtaſy.

Whence the Obſervation is:

DOCTRINE.

That due Conſideration or thoughtfulneſs on their ways, is a ſpecial means for the Cure of the Apoſtaſy of Gods Profeſſing People from their due Obedience to him.

1. Apoſtaſy is a Diſeaſe Gods Profeſſing People are ſubject unto. A Reforming People are ſo, that have made the higheſt profeſſion of Reformation and Recovery from the firſt and grand Apoſtaſy in our Firſt Parents. Some to a total, where not a Saving Change. And the beſt of Saints to that that is partial; a *David*, as he ſays, *verſe* 176. *I have gone aſtray like a loſt ſheep, ſeek thy Servant.*

2. God hath appointed means for the cu

of it that they ſhould uſe, though God only can ſucceed it. As the Miniſtry of the Word, *Iſa.* 58. 1. *Jer.* 8. 22. *Is there no Balm in Gilead? Is there no Phyſician there?*

3. This of Conſideration is a ſpecial one, mans own applying to himſelf, Job 5. 27 *See it and know it for thy good.* Hag. 1. 5. 7. *Thus ſaith the Lord, Conſider your ways,* which is Reiterated. Mans Self Application of what he hears, that Inward Preacher in ſtirring up Thoughtfulneſs of a mans own wayes.

Reaſon 1. This Conſideration of our ways, is neceſſary by Gods Precept requiring it, in order to Repentance. *Hag.* 1. 5. and his diſlike where it is not. Deut. 32. 29. *O that there were ſuch an heart, that they would conſider their latter end.*

Reaſon 2. Thence ariſeth an acknowledgment of Sin, and Averſation to God, which is the beginning of Returning, as he, *I turned,* wherein is an acknowledgment of a need of turning, as being out of the way; this is ſometimes put for the whole of what God requires. *Jer.* 3 13. *Pſal.* 32. 5. And ariſeth from bethinking themſelves, 2 *Chron.* 6. 37. *only acknowledge your Iniquity. I confeſſed my ſin, and thou forgaveſt*; if they bethink themſelves.

Reaſon 3. It is perfected our Saving Return to God, by Gods Efficacious Grace in this way, both in firſt and after Repentance; ſo it

was

was here: *And I turned*, I will or shall do it, his Resolution was stirred up by the work of Powerful Grace, and Encouraged to Endeavour it by the same promised grace. Hosea 6. 1, 2, 3. *Come, and let us Return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two dayes will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.* 1 Joh. 1. 9. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

The further clearing and Improving this Text and Doctrine, shall be in Answer to this practical Question.

Quest. *What is this Thoughtfulness of our wayes or actions that is such a special means for the cure of Apostasy in a Professing People of God?*

Answ. 1. In general take this description of it.

It is the Exercise of all the powers of the Rational Soul by mans Self Reflection for the knowledge of his ways or actions, and for his right Judgment of them with reference to Gods final approving Judgment.

1. It is the Exercise of all the Powers of the Rational Soul, the Understanding, Will and Affections.

2 In way of Self-Reflection for the knowledge of his actions, which is peculiar to

Rati-

Rational Creature, and mainly intends his moral actions, as under the direction of a moral Rule for his Obedience, and Happineſs, in Enjoyment of God, according to his promiſe, to his obedience. *Gen.* 2. 9.

3. It is for his Right Judgment of them. Man hath a Judicature in himſelf, God hath Authorized in him, and is the ſupream and higheſt on Earth; ſubordinate only to God about his own actions in reference to God, and his inward duty to him. Rom. 14. 4. *Who art thou that judgeſt another mans ſervant? to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth.* None are to judge others in things that are indifferent in matters of Religion, or doubtful to true Chriſtians, but themſelves, about the ſincerity in them or not. *verſ.* 13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but conſider our own wayes.* The Judge is Conſcience. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. That is a Witneſs as well as a Judge, having the beſt knowledge of what is in man, next to God. 1 Cor. 2. 11. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, ſave the Spirit of man which is in him?* And hath Authority in the man to ſtir up all the powers in it, for its right judgment, therefore the Pſalmiſt here ſaith, *I thought*, being ſet on work by Conſcience that is ſeated in the heart or practical judgment, that influenceth the whole. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, 21. *If the heart condemns,* (that is Conſcience) God is greater,

and

and will much more condemn; but if it does not, there may be Appeals to God to Juſtify, and confidence in it through Chriſt. Pſal. 130. 4. *But there is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayſt be feared.* Its Knowledge and Authority to ſtir up the activity of the Rational Powers is in order to this Judgment.

4. It is with reference to Gods final approving judgment of them. This is the chief end of the power of Conſcience in man. It is to be approved of God; all our Actions may in his final judgment. 2 *Cor* 5. 11. It was ſo in mans Innocency, to prevent ſin, to juſtify in way of perfect Obedience; and ſince the Fall under the Goſpel its main uſe is to further eſcaping Gods Condemnation of them. 1 *Cor.* 11. 32. by judging themſelves, and appealing to Gods Gracious Throne for approbation and pardon through Chriſt.

2. More particularly, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew what are thoſe Exerciſes of the powers of the Soul when Conſcience is awakened to its duty, in order to true turning to God, are ſtirred up by it, and in what order.

Firſt. The underſtanding power of the Soul, it ſets that a work, which is the firſt Operation of the Soul in order to Returning to God; a ſeeing and knowing of our wayes or actions. None can rightly judge of what he doth not know, and right knowledge of them

muſt

muſt go before any ſerious thoughts about mending them, or returning to a right way; we muſt ſee we are wrong. For clearing this, take theſe Remarks about it.

Firſt. That in mans firſt Creation. God gave man an Excellent Underſtanding; not only into the natures of all other Inferiour Creatures, to give them ſuitable names thereunto, but alſo to know his own duty to God as the way to his Happineſs; not only by the written Law of God in his heart, but his poſitive Law in the Sanctions of the Covenant with him: He Reveals what is good, and his way to his Happineſs. *Gen.* 2. 9, 17. and what is evil, that which God forbids. And he had a freedom and power to will and chooſe the one, and refuſe the other, but Created and Mutable; and ſo by the abuſe of that power hath loſt it, and his knowledge with it of moral good and evil, wholly as ſaving, and any right judgment of it in order to it.

Secondly. In Fallen man there are ſome Remains, as ſome call them, of the light of nature in their Conſciences; or as others rather would call them, common gifts to fallen man; God gives to all men as benefits in common from Chriſts Death to all mankind, that are beneficial to Humane Society, though not

ſaving to the perſon. Thus we read, Rom. 1. 18. *Who hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs,* (that is, ſin againſt the light of Conſcience) The Heathens had a natural light about good and evil, as beneficial or deſtructive to Humane Society. *Verſe* 29. *who know that they that do ſuch things are worthy of death.* And ſome knowledge of duty to God by the help of the works of Creation. *verſe* 19, 20. *Becauſe that which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them, for God hath ſhewed it unto them, For the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God head, ſo that they are without excuſe.* which though not ſaving, yet left them without excuſe; and Sins againſt it, deprived them of much of Gods common Goodneſs, and brought them under much of preſent diſpleaſure, and the effects of it, which might have been avoided. Rom. 2. 14, 15. *For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the Law:* (That is in that Law written, the Scriptures) *theſe having not the law, are a law unto themſelves. Which ſhew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conſcience alſo bearing witneſs, and, their thoughts the mean while accuſing, or excuſing one another.*

Thirdly. But God hath provided further help

help for the knowledge of our ways, and furthering Saving Returning out of that Apoſtaſy, and after-ſtrays from his Rule. And that is the Diſpenſation of his Word. Rom. 2. 4. *Or deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?* Pſal. 147. 19, 20. *He ſheweth his word unto Jacob: his ſtatutes and his judgments unto Iſrael. He hath not dealt ſo with every nation.* Which hath the promiſe of the Spirit in the right diſpenſation of it. *Iſa.* 30. 20, 21. *Their eyes ſhall ſee their Teachers, and ſhall hear a voice behind, ſaying this is the way walk in it.* and the ſucceſs of it depends thereon.

1. There is a further outward light and diſcovery of Sin, in the ſinful and penal evil of it; the written Law of God makes diſcovery of the evil nature of it in that original pravity of our natures ſince the Fall, and of all our evil practices. Rom. 3. 20. *By the Law is the knowledge of Sin,* and by the Goſpel of the Remedy. *verſe* 23, 24. *all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God: Being juſtified freely by his grace, through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt.* The Law ſtrips you naked, and lets you ſee ſin and miſery. And the Goſpel diſcovers the way out of it. Rev. 3. 17, 18. *and knoweſt not that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Buy of me gold tried in the*

fire, that thou mayeſt be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayeſt be clothed, and that the ſhame of thy nakedneſs do not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-ſalve, that thou mayeſt ſee.

2. There are common gifts of the Spirit, which much heightens the light of nature in thus ſeeing Sin and the Remedy, and ſometimes powerful Convictions and Awakenings of Conſcience thereby. Acts 2. 37. *They were pricked in their hearts, and ſaid, Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* to ſtir up Enquiry after the Remedy.

3. There are ſaving illuminations of the Spirit in the Diſpenſation of the Word, whereby man Fallen is Reſtored to a true, though not a perfect knowledge of God and himſelf, ſo of the evil of Sin, and good of Obedience, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. which is neceſſary to a right judgment of our ways, to a ſaving turning to him. *Acts* 26. 18. called, *a turning from darkneſs to light, and the power of Sin and Satan to God*; a ſanctifying all the powers of the Soul, and begins with this, in giving a ſpiritual eye, fit to diſcern a ſpiritual object. 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. *The ſpiritual man diſcerneth all things.*

1. This is the knowledge to be ſought and waited for in the Reading the Word, & Diſpenſation of it. *Mat.* 20. 32, 33. for Chriſts opening the n as to the bl nd men he did. *Joh.* 5. 39.

2. It is to be exerciſed in the knowledge of your

your ways or actions. *Prov.*8,34 *Wait at Wiſdoms gates*, both inward and outward, by ſeeing them in the glaſs of the word. *Jam.*1.25. *Whoſo looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, will be a doer of it, and bleſſed therein.*

3. Making a through ſearch into your hearts, and trial of your ways thereby, eſpecially under Afflictive Diſpenſations for ſin, an alluſion to Judicial Proceedings, that is in *Lam.* 3. 40. *Search and try your ways, and turn to the Lord.* Find out the ſin, and all the aggravations of it, by ſearching and trying your ways, or Examining. And there is need of Calling in Gods ſearch. *Pſal.* 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And ſee if there be any wicked way in me: and lead me in the way everlaſting.* To avoid deceits of our ſinful and deceitful hearts. Jer. 17. 7, 10. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, I try the reins.*

The ſecond operation of the Rational Soul to be exerciſed, is the Memory, whereby things known are kept and recalled when actually forgotten, and is of ſpecial uſe in turning to God; and in fixing the thought upon our ways. This is helped in the firſt operation of it, retaining things to be thought on.

Firſt. By the right, clear and practical knowledge of them. A good memory depends on the

the good Understanding. Those that have the cleareſt underſtandings have the happieſt memories, eſpecially where it is practical about ſin and duty, when under the powerful Convictions by the Word and Spirit, to a deep ſenſe of ſin, in its ſinfulneſs and penal evil of it, to ſtir up to a Concernedneſs for deliverance, ſee *Act.* 2. 37. As they were at *Peters* Sermon that were pricked at the heart. The Apoſtle *James* tells us, *Jam.* 2 25. That ſuch an Hearer of the Word, that looks into the Law of God, (that is his Word) that Reveals the whole mind of God for Salvation, as the Angels do into the Myſteries of mans Redemption, revealed, 2 Pet. 1. 12. where is the ſame word, exerciſeth his underſtanding to know it, enquires after it, and hath impreſſions of the worth and weight of it; *he is not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of it.* It is a proverb concerning old men, *Quod curant ſenes meminerunt.* What old men love, they will remember in old age, when memory fails them in other things. Anſwerable to that Counſel of *Solomon.* Prov. 22. 6. *Train up a Child in the way he ſhould go, and he will not depart from it when he is old.* The Experience of Chriſtians teſtifie to it, thoſe that moſt complain of their weak memories, yet words they have underſtood, and had impreſſion of on their hearts, they never forget. *David* had ſuch a Remembrance

of

of it; that he puts God in mind of it. *Psal.* 119. 49. *Remember the word, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* And encourageth his own faith in him about it, endeavour after such a knowledge. 2 Pet. 3. 18. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* as the way to the Remembrance of them.

2. Conscience Records all a mans actions in the memory, good and bad together, with Gods Dispensations to him by his Word and Providences. It is the Recorder, and Memory is the Book where they are written in order to Gods judgment of them finally, and for our judgment to prevent his Condemning judgment. *Jer.* 17. 1. *It is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a Diamond.*

Hence 2. The second act of memory is needful and useful to the cure of Apostasy, which is recalling to mind that which is actually forgotten concerning Gods Law, his Ordinances and Providences, and our own sins.

1. This God helps in by his Word written, by frequent requiring it in his people to Remember his word. Prov. 4. 4, 5. *Let thine heart retain my words: keep my Commandments and live. Get wisdom, get understanding, forget it not.* His works. *Exod.* 13. 3. *Remember this day in which*

which you came out of Egypt. both merciful and afflictive alſo. *Deut.* 24. 9. So their own ſins. Deut. 9. 7. *Remember, and forget not, how thou provokedſt the Lord thy God to wrath in the Wilderneſs.* So by the Miniſtry of it, it is one great uſe of it to put thee in remembrance. 2 *Pet.* 1. 13. *I think it meet, ſo long as I am in this Tabernacle to put you in remembrance.*

2. By his Providences. 1. Afflictive. Gen. 42. 21. *They ſaid one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.* 2. By merciful Providences. *Ezek.* 16. 63. Then you ſhall Remember your ſins, *when I am pacified to you,* and loath your ſelves for them.

2 It is our duty to ſtir up our own remembrance of our wayes. And that

Firſt. By looking over the Record of Conſcience, as *Ahaſuerus* did the Records of his Kingdom. Eſth. 6. 1, 3. *When the King could not ſleep, and he called for the Records, which were read before him; and enquired what honour had been done to* Mordecai *for ſaving his life.* To ſee his neglect of his duty, in Rewarding faithful Service to him; ſo ſhould we, to ſee our Omiſſions of Duty, and Commiſſions of Sin, with the aggravations of them, as againſt the

Juſtice

Juſtice or Mercy of God to us; ſee them as written in your heart. *Jam.* 1. 25. ſee that Law written in the heart, is a ſetting ſin before you. *Pſal.* 51. 3. *My ſin is ever before me.* As diſcovered in the glaſs of the Law, and bringing your ways to the diſcovery of it.

Secondly. Stir up the activity of memory to its duty in it. *Deut.* 16. 12. *Thou ſhalt remember thou waſt a Bond-man in Egypt.* Iſa. 63. 7. *I will remember the loving-kindneſs of the Lord, according to all the Lord hath beſtowed on us.* Pſal. 77. 11, 12. *I will remember the works of the Lord, ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old.* Reſolve on it, you will remember the words and works of God, to humble for ſin, and encourage to duty.

3. Another operation of the Soul needful to the Recovery from Apoſtacy, is Thoughtfulneſs or Conſideration of our ways, which follows that of memory; as we cannot remember what we do not know, ſo cannot think of it if we do not remember; this affords matter for conſideration and meditation. Truth is the food of the Underſtanding, which it commends to, and ſtores in the Memory; and meditation concocts for uſe and nouriſhment to the whole man, the will and affections of the Soul to live and walk in the ſtrength of it, and is principally here intended and expreſſed by; I thought or conſidered my ways, and turned.

The thoughts are the perfecting acts and operations of the Soul, whereby the Idæa and Image of things are framed in it, which it underſtands and remembers, and hath the moſt immediate influence on the will and affections, as they have on the actions.

As things we outwardly ſee are repreſented by the phanſie and common ſenſe to the underſtanding; ſo when they are practically known and remembred, it is conceived in the will and affections, as a Child in the womb, and are therefore called the firſt born of the underſtanding. And though a man doth not always outwardly practiſe and bring forth to outward view all ſuch thoughts to mans judgment of him, yet they as in the thoughts are in Gods view, and he judgeth his ſtate thereby as good or bad; ſo he ſaith of fallen man as in his natural eſtate. Gen. 6. 5. *The imagination or figments of his heart are evil, and that continually.* Prov. 23 7. *As he thinketh, ſo is he.* And therefore he calls for thy change, as the begining of our true turn to him. Iſa. 55. 2. *Let the wicked forſake his ways, and the unrighteous his thoughts, and Return.* Jer. 4 14. *Waſh thy heart, O Jeruſalem, how long ſhall vain thoughts lodge in you.* And he judgeth of his true Converſion to him by this begining of it. 2 Chron. 6. 37. *If they bethink themſelves and turn.* So that it is neceſſary and uſeful in Recovery from Apoſtaſy, as that

that God ſtirs up Conſcience to excite in them that do turn into the right way. I ſhall not further enlarge upon what thoughts are, being limited by my Text, to the Activity of them in our own ways, as the ſpecial ſubject or object of them, to further turning into Gods ways. And more ſpecially that it is on the ſinful ways of heart and life in us, thoſe that muſt be turned, from which God by his Prophet calls his people to do. *Hag.* 1. 5 7. as a means of Repentance, and was ſucceſsful, *verſe* 12. In my Text we have an eminent Example of it, and in the duty and ſucceſs of it. To direct and help in imitation of it.

Firſt. Think or meditate on the ſinfulneſs of your ways, as you ſhould know the evil of them by the Word, and remember the Convictions by it, with all the aggravations of them. So think on it, and keep your hearts to it. *Pſal.* 51. 3. let ſin be always before you to humble you, and further ſeeking pardon and mortification of it, by ſeeing your ſelves in the glaſs of the Word. *Jam.* 1. 25.

Secondly. Meditate on the penal evil of it, what your ſin deſerves? What Afflictions and Effects of Gods Diſpleaſure for your ſins? So meditate on Gods preſent Providences, as the puniſhments of your evil ways. *Hag.* 1. 8, 9,

10, 11. bids them consider the neglect of their duty to God, and his carriage to them, which was for their sin that he frustrated their expectations of his common benefits. They did sin in unfruitfulness to him. *Isa.* 5. 4, 5.

The grounds of this meditation or consideration, or helps in it are,

1. A consideration of Gods Mercy, Goodness and Patience; think on this, Rom. 2. 4. *Despisest thou the Riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, &c.* You that live under Gospel means have more advantage than others have by the light of nature, having also the Gospel Revelation of the Remedy against sin, and a continuance in his world, notwithstanding provocation by often abusing his mercies, all of them in Rebellion against him, using of them against him, not only his common mercies, but despising that which is the richest Mercy; Discovery of the way to your being the Subjects of his Reconciled Favour, that should lead you to the way of it. This highly aggravated sin in those under the means of Salvation. Deut. 32. 6. *Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* It is not only the greatest ingratitude, but the highest folly to despise your own mercies. Ezek. 18. 30. *Turn, why will you dye, O House*

Houſe of Iſrael? Jonah 2. 8. *A forſaking your own mercies.* Thoſe that might be ſo, if you did improve the means, and get into the way of it. Eſpecially, it is a meditation true Converts ſhould moſt think of, that are under greater mercy in being the Subjects of his ſpecial goodneſs. 2 *Sam.* 12. 7, 8, 9. Thus the Prophet did awaken a *David* to this duty, to think of what God had done for him. *verſe* 13. And would do further in renewing his pardon to him. This appears in the diſcovery of his nature. *Exod.* 34. 6. *And the Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth.* In his making his glory paſs before *Moſes*, he hath diſcovered his gracious nature, the free and full pardoning mercy that is in him. And promiſes. 1 *Joh* 1 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins.* And he is faithful in his promiſe to Chriſt, and that is owing to him, and all in him to encourage this duty.

2. Meditate & think on the Juſtice of God. He is juſt as well as merciful and holy. 1. In his nature. Exod. 34. 7. *I will not clear the guilty.* In the Threatnings of his word. *Gen.* 2. 17. *He that ſins ſhall dy the death.* Pſal. 7. 11. *He will whet his Sword againſt the Impenitent.* And his Providen-

Providences Recorded in his Word. 2 *Pet.* 2. 4, 5, 6 He ſpared not the old world, nor *Sodom*, which are fearful inſtances of it. Nay, th: Heathens that improved not the light of nature. Rom. 1. 18, 26. he manifeſted his wrath from heaven againſt them by ſpiritual and outward Judgments; nay, his only pro eſſing people in the world. Rom. 11. 22. *If he ſpared not the natural branches, will he ſpare you.* Nay, the ſevereſt outward Diſpenſations of Providence is uſually on ſuch. *Amos* 3. 2, 3. nay, his own Children. 2 *Sam.* 12. 11. Beſide conſider his Providential Diſpenſation among your ſelves for neglect of duty he calls to, or commiſſion of ſin, *Hag.* 1. 8, 9. He directs to think of the Judgments they were under, in diſappointing their expectations of the good and uſefulneſs of the Creatures to them.

3. Meditate on the Day of Judgment. *Acts* 17. 31. *He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world.* This is a meditation to Repentance, that there is a fixed day of Gods Final Judgment of all mens ways, good and bad, and their ſtates, manifeſting thereby a Revelation of his Righteous Judgment. *Rom.* 2. 6: It ſhall go well with the Righteous in their ſtate and way of Goſpel Obedience; but it ſhall not go well with the wicked. *Iſa.* 3. 10. This is that the Lord after the manner

manner of men affectionately wiſheth their conſideration of. Deut. 32 29 *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end.* There will be an end of your living in this World, the thing is certain. *Heb.* 9. 28. the time to us uncertain: And there an end of Gods patience and forbearance, and ſpace of Repentance to the Impenitents, and the longer it is, the greater treaſure of wrath *Rom.* 2. 5. And an end of the patience and exerciſe under troubles and difficulties to the Godly in their way of Obedience to God. 2 Theſ. 1. 6, 7, 8. Think on this day which will be a day of Refreſhing. Acts 3. 19. *When the times of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.* To the penitent and gracious reward of your Obedience.

Having given ſome ſpecial helps and grounds of meditation, let me further help and move to the duty by ſome Directions and further motives in it under this Head.

DIRECTION I.

Keep your hearts to it, the heart is very loth and averſe to it naturally, eſpecially on ſuch ſerious thoughts as theſe are: Therefore ſet Conſcience to its work, to apply

apply those things home, and affect the soul with it. Job 5. 27. *Know it for thy good*, and watch your hearts. *Prov.* 4. 23.

2 Avoid hindrances, especially wandring and vain thoughts. Jer. 4. 14. O *Jerusalem, how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee*: Get your hearts free from that: Let them not have lodging; possess the heart, that thoughts are sin, and though not open to man, yet under Gods observance and judgment. Eccles. 12. 14. *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

3. Avoid Companying with vain and idle persons, and often converse with the Godly. *Mal.* 3. 16. *They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and thought upon his Name.*

4. Take fit seasons and times for it, and places, (times) the morning and nights are fit times, sometimes other. Psal. 1. 2. *He meditates on the Law of God, day and night.* *Psal.* 5. 2, 3. *My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.* So the Evening. *Psal.* 119. 148. *Mine eyes prevent the*

night

night watches: that I might meditate in thy word. Gen. 24 63. *Isaac went out in the evening to meditate.* So (places) in the Field, in the Close, when alone; nay, on the Bed. Psal 4. 4. *Commune with your own heart upon your bed.* And at set times, so set your selves to it in them.

MOTIVE.

1. It is the way to have Gods Grace given where it is not, and unlooked for Blessings; though God is not tyed to it, yet his ordinary way it is to work on Rational Creatures suitably to their Reason. And stirs up the exercise of it. *Acts* 2.37. *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* And to revive it where it is. *Psal.* 39. 3. *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue.*

The success here in my Text: *I turned*, which is an acknowledgment to God of his turning Grace, not only being there, but acted by him, effectually to turn him.

2. It is the ordinary way of Wise men,

in their Concerns of this World. The Merchant thinks on his way in his Trade, whether right, and how he proſpers, by looking over his Accounts. The Marriner hath his Compaſs and Obſervation how he Steers his Courſe by it, to mend it where it is otherwiſe then it ſhould be. And ſhall we more exerciſe our Rational Powers for Earth, than for Heaven?

3. Conſider. It is an evidence of Gods thoughtfulneſs of you of Peace and Salvation, and that from Eternity. Jer. 29 10, 11, 12. *I will viſit you, and perform my good word towards you, in cauſing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.* And it is pleaded here by *David*, as a ſign of his Integrity and Effectual Vocation. Jer. 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love: therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee.* So it is preſented for the Conſideration of Gods People, to further their Repentance, as encouraging to Conſideration as a means to it.

4. The fourth and laſt operation of the Rational

Rational Soul in exerciſe for Returning to God, are his judging thoughts, to make a right judgment of them, to prevent Gods condemning for them. 1 Cor. 11. 31. *For if we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged with the World.* Prov. 28. 13. *He that confeſſeth and forſaketh, ſhall find mercy.* This is the turning act, ſo far as in mans power, and he doth it as under the influence of Gods Grace, therewith he makes a judgment of his ways, as in or out of Gods Teſtimonies.

1. There is a judgment of his own ways to be evil, and out of the way of Gods way of his Teſtimonies, which is ſuppoſed in his turning his feet into them; this is the firſt part of true Repentance and Reformation, of their turning from ſin, not only in his outward practice, but alſo the inward affections alſo, that are the feet of the Soul; he ſees all is wrong, his heart, his life, he is going in the way to his deſtruction, from God as his portion, as his Soveraign. And as he ſees this, ſo he judgeth and paſſeth ſentence on this his evil way, and condemns it as that deſerves Gods Condemnation, and Juſtifies God in his Righteous Sentence in the Law. Gen. 2. 17. And juſtifies God in all the leſſer Executions. Pſal. 51. 4. Silenceth complaint of them. *Ezra*

9. 13. *Seeing that thou our God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve.* And assures them without Repentance, and the Gospel Remedy, they shall be Condemned at the Higher Court. 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. And not only passeth this Sentence, if you turn not, you shall dye eternally, but begins Execution in Gods Name and Authority on the Soul, as *Ehud* on *Eglon. Judg.* 3. 20, 21. *And Ehud came unto him, and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone: And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly.* So saith Conscience to the Sinner, and runs the Threatnings to the heart, this is that which is called pricking to the heart. *Acts* 2. 37. at the heart of sin, and wounds it in its course, & lets it a bleeding, which the Law cannot; he also kills sin and self confidence.

2. There is a turning the feet to Gods Testimonies, this is the returning to the right way, by judging aright of Gods way, which he testifies of him, in his Gospel Revelation of pardon and grace in Christ, for Returning Sinners: this he judgeth to be right, the only way of Life, and Salvation. So the smitten Soul is at first put on Enquiry about it, and mourning for sin, and after the healing balsome

of

of the Goſpel, for pardon and grace in firſt Converſion, and ſo in after Returning, this moves the affections to the getting into this way, and Renouncing all other, and to be willing to confeſs and forſake Sin. *Prov.* 28. 13. *Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh, ſhall find mercy.* 1 Joh. 1. 9. *If we confeſs our ſins, he is faithful, and juſt to forgive us our ſins, and to cleanſe us from all unrighteouſneſs.* And to be in love with thankful Obedience to the Commands of the Goſpel. 1 Joh. 5. 3. *For this is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous*; his feet and affections will be carried this way of Goſpel Obedience. Thus think on your ways to ſuch a turning, pray for Gods directing of you. Jer. 10. 23. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himſelf: it is not in man that walketh, to direct his ſteps.* And enlargeth the heart to Run the wayes of Gods Commandments.

Oh! That what hath been ſaid, might ſtir up to this Duty, to think ſo on your ways, that your hearts may be turned to Gods Teſtimonies. I have directed to the way, and I ſhall pray that God would put you into it: Do your Duty in waiting on him for his aſſiſtance to do it as you ſhould.

hould. Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. *I have Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented: and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.* Oh! that you may so think on your ways, that you may turn your feet unto Gods Testimonies; that so you may have Gods acceptance, and manifestation of his Fatherly Love to you.

FINIS.